



# Combating poverty

# On a visite with the mayor ...



# In the beginning

Unemployed, housing problems, debts, dependency, absence of school, psychological problems, hygiene...

Bureaucracy

Telling people what to do

Too little focus on the here and now

# New approach

- GO-team: FAMILY SUPPORT
- 3 social workers (now 7)
- Collaboration with the local police, Child Welfare and Schools
- Intense & integral counseling, low case load
- Follow up by Foundation Roi Boudaoin & Prof. B. Storms (UA)

# New approach

- Methodology:
  - Hands-on approach
  - Based on the needs of the family
  - Focus on trust & mutual respect
  - No restrictions on what
  - No bureaucracy

# Scientific bases

- Theory of scarcity – E. Shafir & S. Mullainathan
  - Why do poor people, make poor descisions.
- Social exclusion – Berghman
  - Shortage of money for a longer period in time gives social exclusion.
- Accessibility of social services – Cantillon
  - Accessible, available, affordable, comprehensible, known, reliable and useful
  - Client - perspective

# Scientific bases

- Providing welfare should be:
  - Generalistic & integral:
    - Contextualize, remove thresholds, negotiate with institutions, prevention (Raeymakers & Van Riel).
  - Oriented on motivation
    - Model of Prochaska, Diclemente & Narcross
  - Focused on empowerment
    - You can't empower people

# Scientific bases

- Competent care-takers:
  - Positive attitude
  - Inequality based on expertise – equality based on relation.
  - Outreaching & interfering
- Competent organisations:
  - Empowered, participative and interprofessional.



# Impact

- 9 criteria:
  - Violence, Housing, Health, Employment, Income, Debt, Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Parenting.
- Before intervention: av. 5,3/9
- After intervention: av. 4,1/9
- 87.7% improved their situation on min. 1 criterium
- 53% improved their situation on min. 3 criteria.

# Effects

Note: these are the most difficult cases in Mechelen.

- Progress where none was made before
- 50-60 families / year
- 1/3 families were unknown
- Template for our entire organization